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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, the explosions at the Boston Marathon remind us that we live in a dangerous world and that human life, regardless of the level of physical excellence, is fragile. The knowledge that You, O God, can bring order from chaos inspires us to number our days so that we may have hearts of wisdom. Use our lawmakers as instruments of Your Providence. May they labor with such faithfulness and integrity that You will surround them and our Nation with the shield of Your favor. Remind them that it is better to fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than to succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following any leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business for an hour. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans the final half.

Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the

Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act, with the time until the recess for the caucus meetings for debate only.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

Today we will continue to work on a path forward to consider amendments to the gun safety bill. Currently, the Manchin-Toomey amendment on background checks is pending to the bill. Senators will be notified when any votes are scheduled.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 729 AND S. 730

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading. I would ask, if it is appropriate, for the clerk to report whatever the Chair advises.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for a second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 729) to protect law abiding citizens by preventing criminals from obtaining firearms.

A bill (S. 730) to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms through straw purchasing and trafficking.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings on these two bills at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

BOSTON MARATHON VIOLENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the prayer given to the American people and to

the Senate through our wonderful Chaplain, he basically said it all. We are still reeling from the senseless violence at the Boston Marathon yesterday. The one thing, though, we are united in is sympathy for the victims of this senseless attack and the families of the victims who are suffering today.

Adding to the horror of this tragedy are the questions of who did this and why. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security are investigating this attack as aggressively as possible.

As the President said last night, rest assured that the perpetrators will feel the full weight of justice for this terrible crime.

ANTI-GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on the anti-gun violence legislation before the Senate, we are making good progress in the effort to schedule a series of votes on amendments.

I have had constructive conversations with my Republican counterpart, Senator MCCONNELL.

The American people deserve to know where we stand on these important antiviolence proposals. There are disagreements as to what we should do with gun legislation, if anything, and I understand that. We have already spent a week and a half on this legislation, so it is time to begin processing these amendments.

I hope we will be able to reach an agreement earlier rather than later—hopefully, sometime by early afternoon—to hold votes on a number of amendments, including both Democratic and Republican amendments.

That series of votes would include a number of issues, not the least of which is the compromise background check proposal crafted by Senators MANCHIN, TOOMEY, KIRK, and SCHUMER. This bipartisan measure has the support of antiviolence advocates and law

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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